

241 section is clearly set off from the round part. The Eastern Timbira term for this
412 implement, piéwapo, means "sharp, flat wood." In probing for tubers, especially
for sweet potatoes, these farmers use a special pointed stick some 40 cm. in length,
which is often derived from the end of a worn-out bow. These two are the only
native agricultural implements that persist in contemporary use in Ponto.

●242 Except for rice and bitter manioc, plants of one species rarely occupy one con-
tinuous major strip, the general practice being to dispose them in patches here and
there or mixed with other crops.

243 Among Timbira cultivated plants, maize holds the place of honor, being the only
177 one whose origin is explained by a myth. Though Ribeiro mentions only two in-
digenous varieties,¹⁰ the Ramkô'kamekra raise four kinds of small-kerneled maize
which they derive from the legendary Star maiden, Kačëkwë'i, viz. 1, pöhipyé,
true or good maize, with small, white, and very soft kernels; 2, pöhikyák, white
maize, somewhat larger, but otherwise similar; 3, pöhikreakäre, with small blue
kernels; and 4, to'rómre, with black kernels of medium size. The large-kerneled
varieties, pöhjti, are additions from the Neobrazilians.

243 The appearance of the Pleiades (krot) after sunset on the western horizon is a
221 harbinger of the rainy season and indicates the need for starting a clearing in order
805 to plant at the first rainfall. This ushers in the meipimrã'k period (p. 84), roughly
coterminous with the rainy season since it ends with the commencement of the
maize harvest.

243 *Horticultural rites.*—A man named Vökräké', whose maternal home is on the
624 east side of the village circle, is charged with ceremonially opening the planting as
796 well as the harvesting of maize. On the former occasion there figures a small gourd
bowl whose edge is painted with urucú and which is filled with maize kernels.
Vökräké' takes this container to the plaza and sets it on the ground, where people
dance around it. Then he takes the bowl to his wife's plot and plants the maize,
whereupon others are free to follow his example. After this functionary's death
his office descends to the matrilineal kinsman to whom he has transferred his name.

243 When the maize stands about 1 m. high, another ceremony is held in order to
782 induce the Moon, Pqduvrj, to ward off noxious animal parasites from the plants.
796 Clapping together their hands and singing "Pqduvrjre kayë'yë rivaá vaká mopó
tu krére," all the villagers of both sexes then slowly dance in the plaza on a full-
moon night, moving from the north southward under the leadership of a precentor
wielding his rattle. In the rainy season they fear a lunar eclipse even far more than
during the dry period, for they think it would destroy the crops. The relevant
ceremonies will be described later.

776 In case of drought, however, not the Moon, but the Sun, Pqt, is addressed. Three
782 old men then march round the boulevard, singing "kedeti/imäpéy/vayakrj'
(Grandfather [= sun],/be good to me and/gladden me [by rain])."

No one—not even the woman owning the plot—is free to eat of the crop until
796 the councilors have tasted of it and declared it mature. The maize harvest is opened
624 by the same man, Vökräké', who inaugurated the planting season. First, a hunting
243 party leaves to secure meat for the village. When they return with game, Vökräké'
asks his wife to fetch from the plots a carrying basket full of maize ears, which are
husked and cooked into meat pies to be served to the councilors in the plaza. Of the
husks Vökräké' makes some twenty shuttlecocks, which his son Rara'k takes to
the plaza and throws, one by one, into the circle of players. These throw each ball
toward one another with the palm of the hand as long as possible without per-

¹⁰ Memoria, § 11.

789 Sometimes a tamhá'k (p. 98) is made to assume the duty of officially tasting
624 sweet potatoes and gourds prior to the harvest. Thus, the Indians hope to improve
their crops at the eleventh hour because the tamhá'k, especially if young and vig-
orous, are credited with the magical power of improving and increasing the yield.
The member chosen is then decorated with the falcon down appropriate to his
organization.

251 *Storage.*—According to Ribeiro the Eastern Timbira cached their food supplies
from year to year in special storehouses: "... e entre tanto que cresce e sazona a
plantação comem elles a coberto das invernadas os generos que do anno passado
ficam reservados em paços particulares, que cada familia guardou escondidamente
para si." Personally I have never seen anything deserving of the designation paiol
(storage room)—except for the modern, closed attica. Tubers—sweet potatoes,
yams, bitter and sweet manioc, as well as arrowroot—are left in the ground, where
they keep best. Thence the Indians take just enough to supply several days' need.
Gourds and beans are rarely kept for a longer period; ground nuts are stowed
away in little baskets and bags of buryty bast. Maize, too, is usually left in the plan-
tation as long as possible and brought home according to demand. Finally, the
residue is carried to the house in one lot, the husk-covered ears being hung in
bunches below the roof so as to be protected against insects by the smoke. Another
way is to fill large buryty baskets and stoppered gourd vessels with the kernels, but
there they usually soon fall prey to insects. Rice, when ripe, must be harvested
forthwith; at first it is gathered in the plantation on a grate of poles covered by
a roof, later it is gradually transferred to the village, where it is piled up in the
attic in regularly stratified heaps. This process, like rice-growing itself, is derived
from the Neobrazilians.

242 Real care is devoted only to next year's seed-corn, which is stored in firmly corded
bags and gourds closed with wax, these containers being packed in baskets usually
suspended high up under the roof.

HUNTING

177 The agricultural progress of the Indians is not due to Neobrazilian example nor to
224 the instructions of missionaries and officials of the Indian Welfare Service. It was
grim necessity that drove the natives to create a new basis of subsistence. The re-
duction of the tribal territory to one-twentieth of its former extent; the encroach-
ments of Neobrazilian cattle on even this residual habitat; and the use of firearms
in hunting by Neobrazilians and, to some extent, also by the Indians caused such
diminution of big game that hunting rapidly lost its economic significance. The
younger people of today know tapira, jaguara, or the mutum (*Mitua mita*) at best
from the narratives of their elders. The only groups preserving the normal aborigi-
nal state in this respect are the Western Gaviões, who bar civilized individuals from
their woods, and the Timbira of the Gurupy, beyond whose riparian dwellings
extend vast tracts of wholly unsettled forests. All other tribes have for a long time
depended primarily on vegetable fare. At festivals, as I discovered among the
Krahô', the hunters often vainly exert themselves for weeks in order to secure the
game flesh required for the ceremonially prescribed meat pies. During my stay with
the Pykôbye I saw no meat except that of stolen head of cattle. While spending six
days among the Kre'pu'mkataye I saw no booty from the chase except for a capy-
bara (*Hydrochoerus capibara*); and when I arrived among the Krikatî the chief's
welcome was the indignant query why I had not brought some meat.

¹⁰⁰ Memoria, § 11.